

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

## **INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTERS' PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS COMPENSATION AND FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REFORM) BILL 2017**

My name is Chris Dyer and I am a career firefighter for the CFA working out of South Morang Fire Station.

The purpose of this email is to show complete support for the proposed fire service reform and to express my view on why it is so desperately needed.

I just want to say before I start that my view is purely in the interest of public safety. Many uninformed people out there think our opinion is driven by the want for certain employment conditions and pay allowances. That is not the case. Our agenda is 100 percent aimed at securing an improved and more modern fire service for Victorian which will ensure a much greater response to emergencies.

I will start with the popular talking point of seven firefighters on the fire ground within eight minutes.

Seven firefighters is the minimum number needed to safely fight a structure fire. This has been researched and proven to be an international standard. This number is used to ensure crew safety and to ensure a backup is available if a crew that is fighting a fire needs rescuing. An example of where this would have helped was the hotel fire in Sale, Victoria in April 2017 where two firefighters were trapped and forced to leap from the burning structure. If they were unable to leap from the balcony, they would have been trapped and would have surely died. If a backup crew were on standby then they could have done a number of things to help including entering the structure to find them or something as simple as setting a ladder up at a nearby window for them to get to. This is one of many examples that could be used to support the seven on the fire ground rule.

The eight minutes is the proven time to contain a fire to the room of origin.

The new Fire Service Reform will ensure there are always at least seven qualified firefighters on the fire ground within eight minutes.

The main benefit of the new reform is giving "all" of metropolitan Melbourne the delivery service it deserves.

At the moment the metropolitan boundary has not changed since approximately 1950. Therefor anything outside that area is classed as country as does not have the same service and response. The main benefit of the reform is to rectify this problem and redraw the boundary to reflect the modern metropolitan boundary of Melbourne in 2017.

The difference in response is simple to explain. Anything inside the metropolitan boundary gets the seven firefighters in eight minutes guarantee. The area outside this boundary is deemed "country" and has to rely on volunteer brigades to be available to respond alongside the nearest staff station.

The problem with relying on volunteers is that they are not guaranteed to respond due to commitments such as family and work. This is not a dig at volunteers. They do great work and are important. But they cannot be relied on to respond like career firefighters do. This is being proven over and over again.

An example of this was a job I went to on May 25<sup>th</sup> 2017. On route to a house fire at 38 Sunridge Drive Mernda, we got further information that the house was confirmed to be on fire. This was a support call for us and was not in our area. We also then received further information that all surrounding volunteer brigades had failed to respond. This meant that we would be fighting this house fire by ourselves until the surrounding brigades could get a crew together to respond.

Another example is on the 29<sup>th</sup> of June 2017, we attended a support call for Doreen Fire Brigade. We were told Doreen and surrounding brigades had failed and asked did we want another brigade paged. Not long after we then heard Doreen Fire Brigade turn out to the job. Minutes later Doreen's truck arrived with one person on board.

As mentioned I work out of South Morang Fire Station which is on the boundary border so we get to see how both sides of the Metropolitan boundary work.

If you compare these jobs to a job we attended inside the metropolitan area you will see the difference is quite clear.

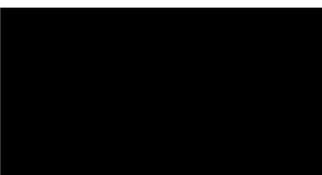
On 27<sup>th</sup> of November 2017 we attended a house fire at 6 Corbin Place Mill Park. This was a support call for the MFB. Upon arrival we had two trucks of five firefighters ready to tackle the blaze, who all had equal levels on training and could rely on each other to get the job done.

If you read all the details of the proposed reform you will find that there are so many other benefits that Victorians will receive. The purpose of my email is to simply voice my support for it and show a few examples of how Victorians will benefit from it. Especially those who live within the new proposed boundary change.

In closing I would like to express my complete respect for volunteer firefighters. My father Barry Dyer is a volunteer firefighter down at Portarlington where he lives. They are one of Victoria's greatest assets. However the fact remains that they cannot deliver the same response that career firefighters do. And Victoria deserves a fire service that can deliver the best possible response. Especially within its metropolitan area.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the matter further please feel free to contact me on [REDACTED] or alternatively via my email address [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,



**Christian Dyer**

